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PRONOUNCED ON THE
OCCASION OF THE FIRST
ANNIVERSARY OF HIS
DEATH.

BY

S. A. KNOPFE, M.D.,
NEW YORK.

Reprint from the MEDICAL RECORD,
January 28, 1905.

WILLIAM WOOD AND COMPANY,
NEW YORK.

GEHEIMRATH DR. DETTWEILER.

EULOGY PRONOUNCED ON THE OCCASION OF THE
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By S. A. KNOPF, M.D.,

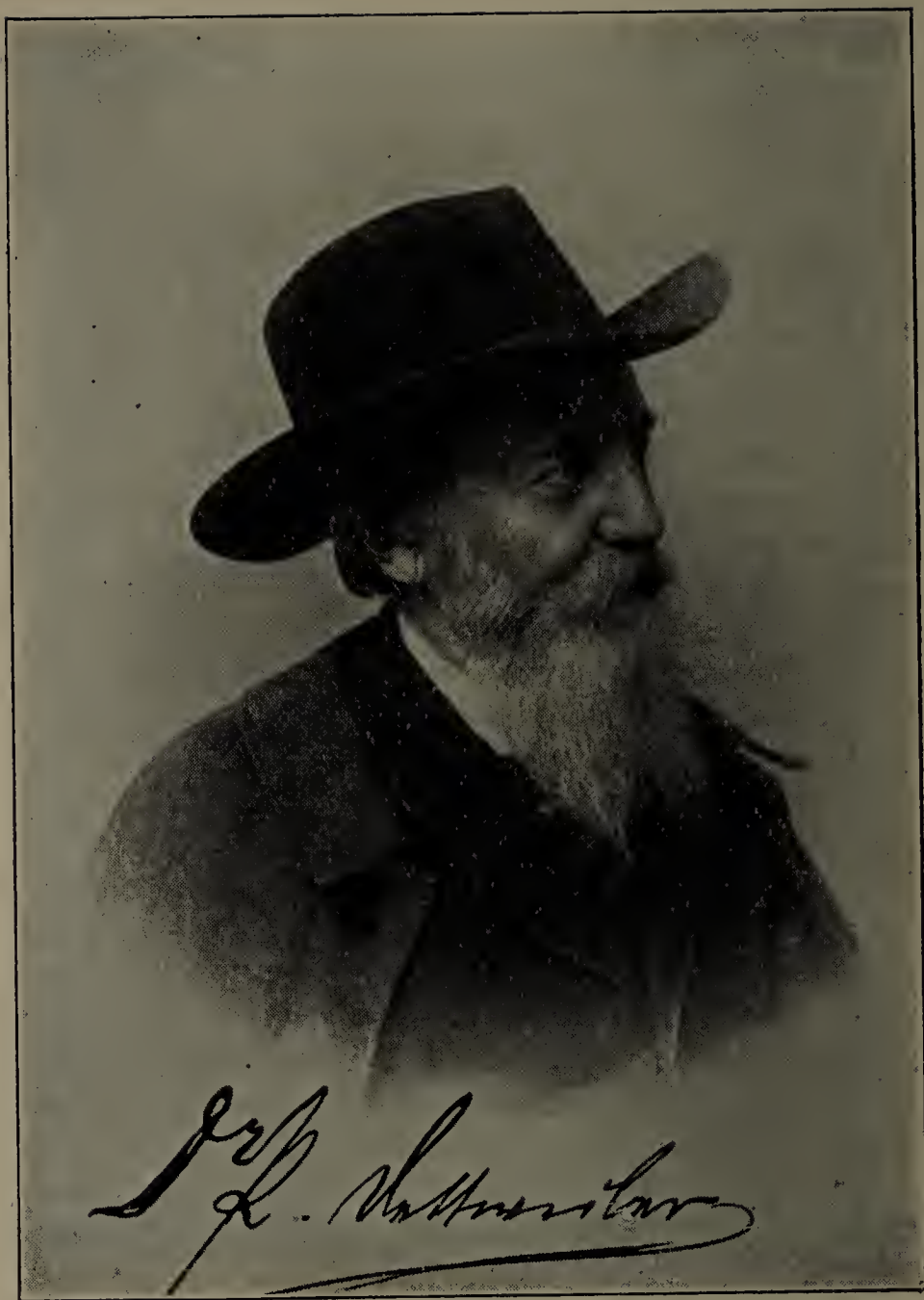
NEW YORK.

A YEAR ago, on January 13, 1904, Privy-Counselor Dr. Peter Dettweiler died at his villa at Cronberg, near Frankfort-on-the-Main. His death was such as he had always desired it might be, without previous invalidism. He died of an apoplectic stroke, while sitting at his desk, writing.

In presenting his photograph to the Academy, I desire to recall in a few words the life and works of this great man. Dettweiler was born at Wintersheim in Hesse, August 4, 1837. He studied at Giessen, Würzburg, and Berlin, and took his medical degree in 1863. During the Danish-Prussian (1864), Austro-Prussian (1866), and Franco-German wars (1870-71) he served as an army surgeon. In the performance of his duty he contracted tuberculosis, and resigning from the army went as a patient to Brehmer's sanatorium in Goerbersdorf. Regaining his health, he became an enthusiastic assistant to Dr. Brehmer. In 1873 Dr. Dettweiler published his first work "Die rationelle Therapie der Lungenschwindsucht in Goerbersdorf," which attracted considerable attention. After six years' service at Goerbersdorf Dettweiler became the founder of the celebrated sanatorium at Falkenstein,

*Read in connection with the presentation of Dettweiler's picture to the Academy of Medicine, at its regular meeting, January 19, 1905.

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which, up to this date, is the Mecca for students of modern phthisiotherapy from all over the world. From everywhere, where sanatorium treatment has taken a foothold, physicians come to Falkenstein to see the institution and learn its methods, and many of our foremost American specialists in tuberculosis have paid a visit to this institution and its distinguished director.

It should be said of Falkenstein that the place was selected without special regard to climate—a rather new idea at that time. It is only an hour's ride from Frankfort-on-the-Main, and only 1,300 feet above sea level. At the time Dettweiler founded this sanatorium, Brehmer's teachings that much higher altitudes were necessary for the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis were considered authoritative.

Dettweiler was one of the first to consider the climatic condition in the treatment of tuberculosis as of secondary importance. Among his other greatest achievements must be counted the inauguration of the rest cure on the reclining chair in the open air, and the foundation of the first sanatorium for the consumptive poor, now located at Rupperts-hain. Germany is in a large measure indebted to him for its now numerous sanatoria for the people. It was my privilege to serve under Dettweiler as assistant when, still in the prime of life, he was medical director of Falkenstein, and I had frequently occasion to observe his many acts of charity as physician, neighbor and friend. Dettweiler was a man of unusual cordiality and kindness, yet of a strong personality. He could be stern and severe when occasion demanded. His power over the inmates of the sanatorium was wonderful. He studied the soul life of every patient; he was his friend, confessor, and physician. The sanatorium patients were

greatly attached to him, and the anniversary of his birth was a holiday at Falkenstein. From all over the world came messages of congratulation from former patients. It was the gratitude of his wealthy patients which enabled Dettweiler to establish the first sanatorium for the poor. To his assistants he was an ideal chief, always helpful, kind, and considerate. Visiting physicians and others interested in sanatorium work were sure of a hearty welcome; to Americans he was particularly cordial and he often expressed to me regret for his inability to converse in English.

Dettweiler's book "Die Behandlung der Lungenschwindsucht in geschlossenen Heilanstalten" (the treatment of phthisis pulmonalis in closed establishments), which has appeared in three editions, has become classic and is still the authoritative work in all matters appertaining to the sanatorium treatment of consumptives. He was the inventor of a most ingenious device for the prevention of the spread of tuberculosis through indiscriminate expectoration. It is an elegant little pocket cuspidor of blue glass which can be manipulated with one hand and hidden in the folds of a handkerchief.

Like our own beloved Trudeau, Dettweiler became a great physician and benefactor of mankind as a result of having been himself afflicted with tuberculosis. In seeking to cure himself, he sought at the same time to cure others and gave to the world the results of his own experiences and sufferings. He was a great lover of art, a skilled amateur sculptor and painter, and a deep student of philosophical and metaphysical works. He was a hygienist in the highest sense of the word and an ardent advocate of cremation. In compliance with his last wish, his body was cremated three days after his demise.

Dettweiler was the ideal sanatorium physician for consumptive sufferers. I believe I cannot do better in closing this feeble tribute to a beloved master to whom I owe so much and who has been a guide and inspiration to me ever since I entered upon my work in phthisiotherapy, than quote from the memorable address which he delivered in 1899 at the occasion of the first Congress on Tuberculosis, his conception of what a sanatorium physician should be. "The medical director of a sanatorium for consumptives should not take upon himself the responsibility of such a position unless he is fully prepared and honestly feels that he can excel his co-workers in strength, creative power, discretion, faithfulness, and duty. Otherwise, he is no better than a hired employee, too weak for the great and uplifting cause of service to his fellow men, which at the end of this nineteenth century has grown to such great heights, and which promises so much for suffering mankind."

At this time when, in the combat of man against man, heroes are being worshipped according to the number they slay in battle, it is inspiring and elevating to be permitted to pay tribute to a man who won glory in fighting disease and through whose personal devotion and skill thousands of useful lives have been saved and made happy.

